

Dear Reps. Williams and Smith, Sens. Lopes and Anwar, and members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Maurine Crouch. I am a resident of New Haven. I am testifying in support of H.B. 5205 An Act Concerning Fair Rent Commissions and H.B. 5233 An Act Concerning Evictions For Cause.

**H.B. 5205 An Act Concerning Fair Rent Commissions:**

As a public health professional, I have seen the impact of rising rent on the communities I serve. Across the state, it has raised about 12 % just in the past year. Across the state, residents have been squeezed by increasing prices, and no where to turn.

In addition to financial strain and stress, it has pressed younger residents and seniors to live in smaller spaces with more people. This is a known risk factor for increasing COVID-19 transmission. Further, financial stress about rent payment is one of many reasons our low-income community members have felt the need to return to work, or worse, never stop working, when they have been identified as a COVID case or contact. While the pandemic may be slowing at this point, we know that another variant or other infectious diseases are able to transmit much more rapidly in situations of financial desperation.

**H.B. 5233 An Act Concerning Evictions For Cause:**

Even more than the issue of rising rents, evictions without just cause are a public health hazard. Without protections against this, renters experience undue stress, and our entire state is put at risk due to increased potential for community spread of infectious disease. The instability caused by eviction puts renters at risk for homelessness, and worsens lifetime health outcomes, for children and adults alike.

Within public health and medicine, one of the most important factors in someone's health outcomes is their housing. Lack of stable housing can make it near-impossible to stay in a treatment plan, find suitable employment, and keep children in school. However, stable housing can make it possible for us to help residents treat diseases from Hepatitis C to breast cancer to COVID-19. Both of these bills, if passed, could decrease our state's disease burden, and improve quality of life for our residents.

I strongly support H.B. 5205 and H.B. 5233 and urge you to favorably vote these bills out of the Housing Committee.

Sincerely,

Maurine Crouch

New Haven, CT